

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 OPIC-12 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19

IO-14 DRC-01 /176 W

----- 007375

R 011900Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3260

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT JM

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER ADOPTS A LOW PROFILE

REF: A) KINGSTON 3405; B) KINGSTON 3218

1. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HIS APPEARANCE AT THE SEPTEMBER 30 PARTY CONFERENCE (REF A) AND A NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN THE WAKE OF TROPICAL STORM GILDA, PRIME MINISTER MANLEY HAS ADOPTED WHAT FOR HIM HAS BEEN A REMARKABLY LOW-PROFILE SINCE HIS RETURN FROM AFRICA. AS A RESULT, THE MIDDLE/COMMERCIAL CLASS OUTCRY (REF B) THAT GREETED HIS RETURN FROM AFRICA HAS SUBSIDED CONSIDERABLY. THE COMMENTATORS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITORS HAVE ALSO LOWERED THE LEVEL OF CRITICISM AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE HAS RETURNED TO A MORE "NORMAL" STATE

2. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT JAMAICA'S PROBLEMS HAVE VANISHED. THE PUBLIC IS STILL CONCERNED ABOUT RISING FOOD PRICES, SHORTAGES OF BASIC COMMODITIES-

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BREAD, SUGAR, SOAP, ETC. RATHER THE TIDE OF DIS-

SATISFACTION AND POTENTIAL UNREST THAT PERMEATED THE ATMOSPHERE IN SEPTEMBER AND EARLY OCTOBER HAS SUBSIDED. PEOPLE, THOUGH GRUMBLING, SEEM TO BE ACCEPTING HIGHER PRICES AND SHORTAGES WITH A REMARKABLE DEGREE OF STOICISM AND THE PROSPECT FOR SIGNIFICANT UNREST SEEMS NOT TO BE QUITE SO GREAT AS A MONTH AGO.

3. THE EBB AND FLOW OF CRISES OF CONFIDENCE IN JAMAICA IS PROBABLY ENDEMIC IN A COUNTRY WITH AS MUCH ILLDISTRIBUTED WEALTH AND UNREALIZED POTENTIAL AS JAMAICA. IT HAS BEEN ABETTED TO A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE BY THE RHETORIC AND BEHAVIOR OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER GOVERNMENT LEADERS WHO MAY AT LAST BE REALIZING THAT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EVEN THEIR MORE MODEST GOALS WILL BE BETTER ASSISTED BY LESS RHETORIC AND MORE ATTENTION TO THE DETAIL OF MANAGING THE NATION'S AFFAIRS. MANLEY'S SELF-RESTRAINT IN THE PAST WEEKS IS DUE IN LARGE MEASURE TO THE WARNINGS HE HAS RECEIVED FROM HIS POLITICAL COLLEAGUES AND FROM INFLUENTIAL PNP SUPPORTERS IN THE BUSINESS SECTOR-IE. THE MOTALONS. WHETHER IT IS ALSO DUE TO A CONVICTION ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S PART THAT THE COUNTRY WILL BE BETTER SERVED BY ACTION THAN RHETORIC REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT A LITTLE SELF-RESTRAINT IN THE USE OF THE KIND OF RHETORIC WHICH SERVES TO POLARIZE THE NATION CAN CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE AND, HOPEFULLY, THE CREATION OF A MORE FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR INVESTORS. AS PREVIOUS PERIODS OF RESTRAINT HAVE COME TO CRASHING HALTS WITH UNSETTLING REMARKS BY CABINET MINISTERS, THIS PERIOD COULD ALSO END THE SAME WAY AND SET OFF ANOTHER ROUND OF UNEASE. HEWITT

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